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THE 'MASTER SPY' MYTH—II

Case against Soblen: An undocumented political concoction

By William A. Reuben

Second of a series on the espionage conspiracy case against Dr. Robert Soblen. The first article, Aug. 21, dealt with his accuser, his brother Jack Soble, arrested in 1957 and headlined as a "master spy" for the Soviet Union.

AT THE CONCLUSION July 13 of the espionage trial of Dr. Robert Soblen the trial judge, William B. Herlands, dismissing the jury which convicted the defendant, made these observations:

The jurors' findings were "fair and just . . . the only verdict possible;" the trial itself was "a symbol and symptom of the American system of justice at its finest."

Judge Herlands then told the convicted defendant that sentencing would be postponed until Aug. 7, almost a month later. A conspiracy to commit espionage, the judge said, is analagous to mass murder and unless the defendant cooperated between then and the sentencing date, he would "impose punishment consonant with the conception of the gravity of the offense." The New York **Times** headline put it more bluntly: SOBLEN IS WARNED TO NAME RED SPIES." A death penalty could have been imposed for conspiring to obtain material relating to the national defense in wartime.

NO CRIME: On Aug. 7 Dr. Soblen, who suffers from leukemia and in the opinion of court-appointed doctors has less than a year to live, appeared in court for sentencing. There he made his only statement of the whole trial period. He affirmed his innocence. He told the court that he had never done anything to hurt the U.S.; that he had never engaged in espionage; that he was guilty of no crime, having been involved in nothing but lawful political activities; and that therefore he could not give the FBI the names of any spies.

Thereupon the judge, repeating his observation of July 13 that the defendant's alleged crime was analagous to mass murder, sentenced the mortally ill, 61-year-old doctor to life imprisonment.

NEVER ON STAND: Since, although Dr.

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In here lived families of Negro tennant farmers
Share cropper & day workers, who have been
driven from their homes or evicted by White landlords
because they dared to use their American right to
register and vote

WHILE WASHINGTON WAS DECLAIMING ABOUT THE ABSENCE OF ELECTIONS IN CUBA . . .
These tenant farmers from Tennessee's Fayette County were demonstrating outside one of their tents on Chicago's South Side to show what happened to them when they sought the right to vote in free elections in the U.S. The baby, Freeman Clemon, was born in a tent city in Mason, Tenn. And we wonder also why Washington doesn't worry about the lack of elections in South Korea, Turkey, Spain, Portugal and other parts of the Free World.

FOOD HOLDOUT MAY BE REPLY TO SCUTTLING OF KENNEDY BILL

The farmers organize to fight the squeeze

By Lawrence Emery

WHILE THE OLD Congressional coalition of Republicans and Southern Democrats was scuttling the Kennedy Administration's ambitious omnibus farm bill, a militant Midwest farmers' organization was beefing up its ranks for a new attack on the farm problem.

On Aug. 7, 13,000 farmers from 14 Midwest states gathered in Des Moines, Ia., for a meeting of the National Farmers Organization which believes direct collective bargaining with processors is the answer to the cost-price squeeze in which the American family farm is caught. NFO president Oren Lee Staley, 37-year-old Missouri livestock farmer, said the gathering was the largest meeting ever held by a farm organization.

The NFO's program is to withhold produce from market until processors are forced to sign contracts for adequate prices. The organization had 180,000 members in its early days but its leaders will not reveal its membership today. It is believed to be organized in 400 of the 500 leading counties of the Midwest farm belt and Staley said that, as a result of a current organizing drive, he expects "we will be ready in the fall" for a first big test of strength.

THE STRATEGY: The membership has authorized the board of directors to set the time, the product and the processor for the withholding action. If they decide on livestock, the strategy will be to concentrate on one major meatpacker with the aim of winning a contract that would set a pattern for the industry. Spokesmen for meatpacking concerns scoff at the threat, but NFO leaders say

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Report: Brazil, Guiana and the Americas' economic crisis

PORTENTOUS EVENTS in recent days in Brazil, largest of our hemispheric neighbors with 68 million people, and in British Guiana, one of the smallest with 540,000, are bringing to a climax the crisis of economic sovereignty in the Americas.

In Guiana, a British colony on the shoulder of South America, Dr. Cheddi Jagan, whose government was deposed by Britain eight years ago, has for the second time since been returned to leadership by the Guianans, this time with full rights of internal self-government. Dr. Jagan immediately called for full independence now, in the conviction—heavily stressed in his campaign which won 20 of the colony's 35 legislative seats in the election Aug. 21—that only with full independence will his government be able to industrialize its economy.

"You must know this," he told the voters in his opening address of the campaign: "Colonies and semi-colonies like Latin America are not meant to be industrialized. They are meant as sources of food, raw material and mineral resources and as markets for industrialized goods."

IN BRAZIL on Aug. 25 Dr. Janio Quadros, the reform president who won the largest popular vote in Brazil's history last October, dramatically resigned after seven months in office, with the statement that he had been "overcome by the forces of reaction" and thwarted by the ambitions of groups that opposed him, "including some from abroad." Dr. Quadros in his few months in office—during which he opened negotiations for resumption of diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union, affirmed cordial relations with Cuba and urged consideration by the UN of the admission of the People's Republic of China—found his domestic reform program endangered by a hostile Congress. Also, as in the case of the early months of Cuba's revolutionary government in 1959, supporters of his candidacy had turned against him as he sought to effectuate his policies of reform and foreign relations.

Indeed, his resignation came after a broadcast charge by Gov. Carlos Lacerda of Guanabara State, a former supporter who broke with him over his Cuba policy, that Dr. Quadros had planned to put Congress into permanent recess and set up a dictatorial government.

DR. QUADROS' VICE PRESIDENT, Joao Goulart, was out of the country at the time of the resignation, visiting China to conclude a trade pact. Goulart was the running mate of a principal opponent of Quadros in the October election, Marshal Henrique Teixeira Lott, winning the vice presidency by a narrow margin over Quadros' candidate (a split vote is allowed in Brazil). Goulart is considered well to the left of Qua-

(Continued on Page 2)

THE MAIL BAG

All-labor candidates?

SAN FRANCISCO, CALIF.

The San Francisco Chronicle recently carried a story about serious consideration being given by the AFL-CIO Central Labor Council to the running of labor candidates here. There is good prospect that the Teamsters and other non-affiliated unions will support this good move toward independent political action.

The Cuban fiasco, Kennedy's war-mongering, heavy Federal taxation, the increase in state taxation under Democratic Governor Brown are just some of the reasons for the deep disillusionment of the people in both the Republican and Democratic Parties.

The possibilities for a labor party have never been so good. The people want new hope, a new, strong program and honest candidates not tied by campaign funds to the profiteers.

Name withheld

What's the rush?

LITTLE FERRY, N.J.

Do something in the way of a "Committee of Survival" to stop the Kennedy rush toward a nuclear war.

Leo Quanchi

'Sign of sanity'

BERKELEY, CALIF.

As a feature, "How Crazy Can You Get" is always interesting, but I suggest another feature whose theme might be expressed in some such title as "Signs of Humanity" or "Signs of Sanity."

As an example, I offer Senator William Fulbright's statement in a TV interview on July 30. Referring to the recent Senate resolution opposing any change in China policy, he termed it "a Republican ritual — a hangover from the Senator Joseph McCarthy era when Republicans were trying to prove the Democrats were soft on communism."

Name withheld

Letter technique

CHICAGO, ILL.

Report to Readers Aug. 7 urged readers to write their senators to "join Fulbright, Clark and the few others in the Senate who insist that armed intervention is not the answer to problems in the modern world."

It is not enough merely to write to legislators and officials. It is equally, if not more, necessary to write frequent letters-to-editors to large-circulation newspapers. In this manner, a peace advocate communicates with his fellow citizens at large, and his ideas become part of the "body politic" of their thinking. In relationship to this thinking, the legislator acts.

Albert Bofman

Film backfires

BARRE, VT.

With a lot of publicity from the press and radio, the film **Operation Abolition** was launched on the Vermont public. The showing was at Stowe, Vt.

In spite of the "you must see it" admonitions of the press, only about 60 attended. Several local unionists went to attempt to point out the distortions in the film, particularly those parts implicating Harry Bridges and Archie Brown of the Longshoremen's Union in the alleged rioting.

A group of Quakers and summer camp students at the meeting pointed out the falsehoods in the film and defended the Bill of Rights. They were effective, as is shown by the bitter attacks against them. Our TV station assured the good people of Vermont that the FBI would investigate the source of the opposition to the showing.

Chalk up a complete flop for **Operation Abolition** and its sponsors.

J. C.

Belated thanks

MARION, IOWA

To Senator Fulbright:

"Please accept my belated congratulations on your efforts to keep this country out of war."

Irene Good Coombes

Detroit election

DETROIT, MICH.

When I ran for mayor of Detroit four years ago, many supported my candidacy even though we didn't agree on every question in the world.

This year Robert Himmel of the Socialist Workers Party is running for mayor and I am running for the city council. We'd like very much to have your support. The election is on September 12.

Also, I'd like to commend to your attention the candidacy of James Sexton, the unemployed candidate for Common Council. He's not a socialist but his campaign goes in the right direction and merits the support of all progressives.

Sarah Lovell

Loren N. O'Brien

PETOSKY, MICH.

In August the progressive movement lost one of its staunch supporters, Loren N. O'Brien of Manton, Mich.

He had been active in the Farmers' Union, the Townsend Plan and of late in the Progressive Party. He was well known to readers of the GUARDIAN, had taken part in debates on the labor movement and had traveled to many states as well as to Cuba.

His devotion to the cause of freedom and truth and his deep understanding of people are hard to find in this troublesome world.

Ralph Jaclan

On a clear night

SANTA BARBARA, CALIF.

If I cared what happened to David Lawrence—and I couldn't care less about anything — I would worry about the bats that keep multiplying in his belfry.

In his column Aug. 14, he insists that Major Titov would be unable to see the lights of great cities from 160 miles above the earth without a powerful telescope.

If you drive to the top of Mt. Diablo, near San Francisco, the ranger will tell you that on a clear night you can see the lights of Los Angeles, 350 miles away, with no telescope whatever. By daylight one can see the snowy peaks of the Sierra Nevada with the unaided eye.

If Mr. Lawrence's shortsightedness grows on him, I fear he will soon be as blind as his belfry's occupants.

Phyllis Zakheim

Jon in the London Daily Mail

"I hope it rains next weeek end; then we can stay at home."

A puzzlement

HAVANA, CUBA

I was somewhat puzzled by an article, "Pack Your Bags," in the English-language publication **Moscow News** of May 13. It was written by the American Express representative in Moscow. It closed with this information:

"American Express Company is the only American establishment that is officially and permanently represented in Moscow. In accordance with the agreement that we have with Intourist, all American Express offices in the United States and its subsidiaries throughout the world are Intourist's travel agents. In many of these offices tourists from America or any other country can get any travel information they would like to know, choose the most convenient itinerary and purchase a trip to the Soviet Union. The combined efforts of Intourist and American Express offer sufficient guarantee that they will obtain the best possible services all through their travel holiday."

What puzzles me is this: If Intourist and American Express can co-operate in encouraging tourism to the Soviet Union, why is it that U.S. citizens who attempt to visit Cuba stand in danger of a fine and going to prison? Or perhaps Cuba is more "Communist" than the Soviet Union.

Ilah Warner

For the parched

VANCOUVER, B.C.

To us every issue of your paper is as a drink of water to a thirsty man. It rejoices our hearts.

Alex Tabbson

How Crazy Can You Get Dept.

RED PROPAGANDA: A REPORT BY THE AUTHORS OF "THE UGLY AMERICAN." In a Moscow hospital, a little boy from Ceylon was treated for polio. When he returned home, he was greatly improved. His mother (an influental journalist) will always be grateful to the Russians. A simple act of charity? Hardly. It's part of the Kremlin's calculated plan to win friends—and influence nations. Read the whole frightening story.

—Ad for the **Saturday Evening Post** in the San Francisco **Chronicle**, Aug. 15.

One-year free sub to sender of each item printed under this heading. Be sure to send original clip with each entry. Winner this week: C. D., San Francisco, Calif.

Ten Years Ago in the Guardian

LEADERS OF U.S. PEACE ORGANIZATIONS last week placed their hopes in immediate action by the people to prevent a resumption of full-scale war in Korea. The American Peace Crusade, which coordinates the work of many peace groups around the country, appealed for emergency measures. Its co-directors, Dr. Willard Uphaus and Thomas Richardson, proclaimed the week beginning Sept. 2 as "Cease Fire Week," recommended as a minimum goal 50,000 peace messages to President Truman. At a conference in Chicago to plan a five-week campaign, Dr. Uphaus said:

"I urge all who desire to work for peace to go into action now, with special attention to Congressmen and the President, to see that the killing in Korea stops immediately and that the peace talks are successfully carried out."

—From the National Guardian, Sept. 5, 1951

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REPORT TO READERS

Brazil and Guiana

(Continued from Page 1)

dros, having the support of Brazil's proscribed but very much alive Communist Party.

A "STRONG MAN" immediately emerged in the person of 69-year-old Marshal Odilio Denys, Minister of War in Quadros' cabinet, who said the time had come to choose between communism and Brazil. He assumed leadership of forces seeking to prevent Vice President Goulart from succeeding to the presidency. When Marshall Lott broadcast a demand for the succession of his October running-mate, Denys caused Lott's arrest and those of a major-general and two brigadiers who had backed up his demand.

At GUARDIAN press time Goulart was in Paris on his way back from China, and had been threatened with arrest by Denys if he completed the journey home. Ranieri Mazzilli, head of the Chamber of Deputies, became interim president.

The entire military, however, is not with "strong man" Denys, as evidenced by Marshal Lott's opposition. Troops in three states—Rio Grande do Sul, Santa Catarina and Parana—were alerted by commander of the Third Army, Gen. Jose Machado Lopez, in apparent support of the succession of Goulart. In Porto Alegre, a Goulart stronghold in southern Brazil, the federal communications agency closed down two radio stations which had broadcast a pro-Goulart speech by Gov. Leonel Brizola of Rio Grande do Sul State. After troops seized also a state radio transmitter to prevent Brizola from communicationg with Brasilia, the governor took over a radio station owned by a newspaper "to keep the public informed of events."

PRESIDENT QUADROS' RESIGNATION seemed parallel in many respects to the resignation of Fidel Castro from prime ministership of Cuba in July, 1959, to dramatize his fight against conservative members of his government and to invite public support for his policies. The result was the resignation of Cuba's first president after the revolution, Manuel Urrutia, and the succession of Oswaldo Dorticos Torrado. Castro then resumed the prime ministership; Dorticos is still Cuba's president.

Dr. Quadros' vice president, Joao Goulart, was out of the country at the time of the resignation, visiting China to arrange a trade pact. Goulart was the running mate of a principal opponent of Quadros in the October election, Marshal Henrique Teixeira Lott, winning the vice presidency by a narrow margin over Quadros' candidate (a split vote is allowed in Brazil). Goulart is considered well to the left of Quadros, having the support of Brazil's proscribed but very much alive Communist Party.

THE SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCE between the two situations—asuming that Quadros may have resigned with the purpose of arousing public support for his policies and for the succession of his aggressive, Left-backed vice president—is that the Castro government had disarmed and disbanded the Batista army when the split came in Cuba. Brazil's army is still in business and that part of it loyal to Denys may be expected to quell public demonstrations in support of Quadros' policies and Goulart's succession.

While speculation arose immediately that somehow the CIA of the U.S. had a hand in Brazil's crisis—and indeed both Cuba and the U.S.S.R. blamed U.S. economic interests for opposition to Quadros" developing foreign policy—the chances are that a right-wing military coup in a nation of the consequence of Brazil would be bad medicine for U.S. Latin American policy, as the New York **Times** noted editorially Aug. 28. Brazil had received assurances of loans of upwards of $1 billion from the U.S. This had been interpreted as support for President Quadros' program of economic betterment for 25 million people in northeast Brazil whose annual average per capita income is less than $100 a year.

Also, Brazil's labor movement in the industrialized areas of Sao Paulo and Rio de Janeiro is facing rising living costs and preparing to press for a 75% wage increase in October.

It is exceedingly doubtful whether Brazil's army and police—even if undivided in loyalties—could hold back revolt against a rightist coup by the underprivileged millions who had seen in Dr. Quadros "the candidate of hope." Such a revolt, if begun, would surely set off chain reaction among all the peoples of Latin America, whose incomes are anywhere from one-third to one-twentieth of well-fed U.S., about one-tenth on the average.

To head this off, the U.S. may well be forced to side with the Constitutionalists in Brazil for the succession of leftist Joao Goulart.

THE GUARDIAN

KUMAR GOSHAL REPORTS FROM AFRICA

Exclusive: An interview with Ghana's Nkrumah

By Kumar Goshal
Guardian staff correspondent

ACCRA, GHANA

"WHAT I FEAR MOST," Ghana President Kwame Nkrumah said, "is that if we Africans don't unite, we will soon be fighting among ourselves, with the colonialists pulling wires from behind the scenes to make us cut each other's throats for their own diabolical purposes."

We were sitting in Dr. Nkrumah's office in Flagstaff House. His informal manner had quickly put me at my ease for the interview. He answered all questions frankly, unhesitatingly and to the point. From the wide range of subjects covered, I gathered that his chief goals were: (1) the unity of the African states that are already free, "a political union involving coordinated economic, military and cultural activities for the security of our continent;" (2) the independence of all African states still under colonialism, for "as long as a single African country remains unfree, it endangers the freedom of all others"; (3) developing Ghana rapidly into a prosperous land and making it a center of learning for all Africans to demonstrate that "the principles of socialism, adapted to African needs and traditions, can benefit even a country of less than six million people."

UNITY A NECESSITY: African unity is not a new idea. It has been urged for a long time by Dr. W. E. B. Du Bois, and the late George Padmore, both close friends of Dr. Nkrumah. It has remained for President Nkrumah to make an attempt to put the proposal into effect. He told me:

"It is absolutely necessary now. Colonialism is far from being dead. Many African countries are free today, others are on their way to freedom. But many of them are too small, with too few resources, and they can easily fall prey to neo-colonialism, to economic dominance from outside, which will mean political dominance from outside, too. Besides, look at Algeria, Angola, Southwest Africa, South Africa and especially at the Congo if you think colonialism is dead."

The Congo situation constantly came up in our conversation. Few persons outside Africa understand the profound impact of the Congo's tragedy on African leaders and ordinary Africans alike. In Guinea and Ghana, the subject of Western responsibility for the Congo strife sooner or later came up in all conversations with officials, and prevention of similar tragedies was always given as one reason to press for speedy progress in these countries.

NEO-COLONIALISM: Ever since they formed a loose alliance, Ghana, Guinea and Mali have discussed closer African unity. Events in the Congo lent urgency to the idea. To Dr. Nkrumah the Congo tragedy was unmistakable evidence of "neo-colonialism"—of attempts by Western powers to create and exploit chaos in a weak and newly free country and to bring to power a leader who would follow their dictates.

Last January the heads of state of Ghana, Guinea, Mali, the United Arab Republic, Morocco and the Algerian Provisional government, joined by the Lybian Foreign Minister and Ceylon's ambassador to the U.A.R., met at Casablanca. They agreed on certain proposals on the Congo, which their representatives later took up at the UN. More importantly, the African members at the conference formulated the African Charter of Casablanca as a defense against "neo-colonialism." This charter opposed "foreign troops" and "bases" on African soil as endangering "the liberation of Africa" and urged vigilance against "political and economic interventions and pressures."

FOR STRONG UNION: The Casablanca Charter also recommended the establishment of an African Consultative Assembly; political, economic and cultural committees; and a Joint High Command. Experts were to meet in three months to spell out the details of these organizations. On the occasion of a visit by Senegal President Leopold Senghor to Accra, Dr. Nkrumah referred to the Casablanca charter and said:

"It is time for Africans to discard completely the labels which have been handed down to us by the imperialists and colonialists. It is often forgotten that the fact that I speak English does not in any sense turn me into an Englishman. Similarly, the fact that you speak French does not make you a Frenchman . . . We are always and essentially Africans . . . We should work actively toward the creation of an African community which could lead to a strong political union of African states. [The Casablanca Conference] marked an important point in establishing a feeling of community among African territories."

There was an even greater sense of urgency when representatives of Ghana, Guinea, Mali, the U.A.R., Morocco and the Algerian Provisional government met at Cairo last May. Since the Casablanca meeting, the Congo's Premier Patrice Lumumba had been murdered. The shock and resentment this murder provoked runs deep in Africa.

MEETING HELD: At Cairo, the Casablanca powers scheduled meetings to set up functional organizations. On July 15 the African High Command—consisting of the Chiefs of Staff of member states—met to coordinate activities. An African Economic Committee met the same day in Guinea. An African Cultural Committee met in Morocco on July 31 and the Foreign Ministers of the member states will meet on September 15.

The Cairo meeting pledged aid to the liberation movements in Algeria and Angola. It earmarked $140,000 for a liaison committee in Mali's capital, Bamako, to coordinate the work of the Casablanca powers.

In an apparent effort to resist the pull of the Casablanca powers, 20 other African states, including Nigeria, Upper Volta and Ethiopia, met at Liberia's capital, Monrovia, last May. The Monrovia group adopted resolutions supporting some form of unity of African states short of political union, condemned South Africa's policy of apartheid and placed its trust in the UN to solve crucial problems. Most observers viewed the Monrovia conference as a forum to promote Nigeria as leader of the emergent states.

SWIFT ACCORD: But the pull of the Casablanca powers was more potent than the Monrovia group had realized. After attending the Monrovia conference, Upper Volta's President Maurice Yameogo visited Ghana. Following this, President Nkrumah received a tumultuous welcome in Upper Volta. Swiftly the two leaders agreed to promote unity of their adjoining nations. And at the border town of Puga on June 28, they broke down a wall separating their countries and unveiled a monument as thousands from Upper Volta and Ghana cheered.

I asked Dr. Nkrumah how he managed to reach agreement with Yameogo so quickly. He said: "It was quite simple. Upper Volta is an arid land. It raises no cash crop such as cocoa, as we do, needs power and irrigation projects to raise the living standard of its 3,500,000 people. When President Yameogo came to Accra, he saw the progress we were making. Our Tema harbor and Volta River projects are advanced enough to demonstrate that a small state like ours, only recently freed from colonial rule, can build itself up into a modern and progressive state in less time than it took many bigger nations of the world. He could see for himself that economic cooperation with us, the sharing of the power from the Volta dam, opening roads between our two countries to make exchange of goods possible, would benefit both lands."

IDEA SPREADS: The idea of African unity is spreading. While a joint Upper Volta-Ghana committee was working to eliminate customs barriers, and promote economic cooperation, Nigeria's Chief Obafemi Awolowo, leader of the opposition Action Group in the government, declared after a visit to Ghana that Nigeria should join the Ghana-Guinea-Mali union, as Upper Volta was doing. Governor-General Nnamdi Azikiwe of Nigeria, stopping at Ghana's Takoradi port on his way to London, supported the idea of African unity and an African High Command ("If Europe can set up NATO, why can't we have an African High Command to protect the African continent?").

In neighboring Togo, the Unification Riders are plugging for unity with Ghana and Premier Sylvanus Olympio was obliged to make a statement supporting this. It is predicted that the Ivory Coast and Gambia—after it gains independence—will follow Upper Volta.

To further African economic cooperation, Dr. Nkrumah, Guinea's President Sekou Toure and Mali's President Modibo Keita met in Mali's capital, Bamako, the day before the wall between Upper Volta and Ghana tumbled and proposed joint action to establish an African Common Market. They agreed to a meeting Aug. 12 at Labe, Guinea, to schedule conferences of youth movements, trade unions and women's organizations to promote action.

AFRICA CHARTER: On July 1 the three governments released the Charter for the Union of African States they had signed in Accra last April. The charter said: "The Union of African States shall be regarded as a nucleus of a United States of Africa. It is open to every State, or federation of African States, which accepts its aims and objectives." Its 14 articles call for strengthening "ties of friendship and fraternal cooperation among the member states, politically, diplomatically and culturally" and pooling "their resources to consolidate their independence and to safeguard their territorial integrity."

To those who attribute the drive for African unity to a desire of President Nkrumah to dominate Africa, Ghanaians unanimously refer to Article 3 of their constitution, which empowers the government of Ghana to relinquish part or total sovereignty in the interest of a United States of Africa.

THE CHILDREN OF GHANA: IN THEIR MATURITY AFRICAN UNITY WILL BE A REALITY
Their President has a sense of urgency which is shared by his neighbors in the new nations

NEW YORK

Save the date for a GREAT DAY!

Pete Seeger
at the
Guardian Picnic
Sat., Sept. 16
Westchester County
For information call OR 3-3800

The farm story

(Continued from Page 1)

most packers work with only a ten-day supply of meat on hand and that organized farmers could win in a showdown. The organization has held several test withholding actions in the past and now believes it has the strength it needs.

The NFO was formed in 1955 with headquarters in Corning, Ia. It started out with dues of $1 a year, but now signs members for three-year periods with dues of $75. It presently has 300 organizers in the field and maintains an office staff of 18 which it plans to expand to 25 by the end of the year.

Staley points out that the farmer's share of the food dollar has shrunk from 53c to 39c since World War II and that the middleman's share has risen proportionately. He contends that concentrating on legislation is not enough and that direct action through collective bargaining not only is needed but can be successful: "Farmers have less than 10% of the vote but 100% of the food."

WHAT THE BILL DID: The administration's omnibus farm bill was introduced in both houses of Congress on April 18. Its major feature would have permitted Secy. of Agriculture Orville L. Freeman, working with selected farmer advisory committees, to devise comprehensive plans of production controls, price supports and marketing controls of all farm commodities. Each commodity program would have been submitted to Congress with a right of veto; if neither house rejected it within six months it would have been considered approved Thereafter it would have been submitted to a referendum by the growers with a two-thirds affirmative vote required to put into effect.

The bill's preamble said its aim was to give farmers an opportunity to achieve "parity of income with other economic groups by providing them with the means necessary to adjust their agricultural output to requirements and to develop markets for the products . . ." After some skirmishing over the phrase, it also recognized the "importance of the family farm as an efficient unit of production and as an economic base for towns and cities in rural areas."

FURTHER DEPRESSION: Freeman urged adoption of the measure with the warning that if its comprehensive price-support program was defeated, "millions of farmers, their incomes depressed below subsistence level, would swell the ranks of the unemployed, would crowd already crowded areas of our cities, seeking jobs . . . Further decline in income for the family farm could lead to a corporate type agriculture controlled by outside capital. Hired labor would increasingly replace work done by the farm operator . . ."

The program was backed by the Natl. Farmers Union and the Natl. Grange, but it was bitterly opposed by the American Farm Bureau Fedn., largest and most conservative of the farm organizations.

Republicans launched their offensive against the program early in May with a $25-a-plate fund-raising rally in Des Moines with Richard Nixon as the featured speaker.

STOVER COMMENTS: The program was also opposed by the U.S. Farmers Association, an independent organization in Iowa. Fred W. Stover, its president and editor of its paper, **U.S. Farm News**, said "it has all the earmarks of a scheme to superimpose on agriculture a hand-picked political bureaucracy to replace both the legislative branch of government and the farm organizations—or almost all the farm organizations, all but perhaps one. That, of course, would be the 'company union.' It would be the Farmers Union under the Democrats and the Farm Bureau under the Republicans . . . It is contended that this bill will raise farm income. But instead of price supports at 'not less than 90% of parity' as pledged in the Democrats' platform, the bill makes 90% of parity the ceiling instead of the floor. . . . Farmers would prefer to see the major emphasis put on raising farm income. But it is becoming clearer right along that this is not the aim of this Administration."

Wall Street Journal

"Someday, son, all these unplanted acres will be yours."

Although Republicans were opposed to the program in principle, they concentrated their opposition in the charge that it "would give unprecedented powers to the Secretary and constitute a surrender by Congress of its power to legislate in this field." With the support of conservative Southern Democrats they killed the Administration proposal in the Senate Agriculture Committee on June 27 and in the House Agriculture Committee two days later. The **New York Times** called the defeat "one of [the] major legislative setbacks of the year" for the Administration.

CHECK THE SURPLUS: A compromise farm bill was then put together and was adopted by Congress on Aug. 3. It was signed into law by President Kennedy on Aug. 8. Its major provisions are aimed almost exclusively at reducing, or at least checking, the massive surpluses of feed grains, wheat and other commodities that have been piling up steadily over the past decade. Existing laws for disposing of surplus commodities both domestically and abroad were extended. and new restrictions on the planting of corn and other feed grains and of wheat were authorized.

Feed grain growers were offered increased price supports if they volunteered to take 20% of their acreage out of production; in addition they would receive payments amounting to 50% of the return they could have expected on the idle acres. The wheat program is similar, except that a 10% reduction is mandatory for participating farmers (the wheat program was overwhelmingly adopted by growers in a national referendum Aug. 24).

THE FAMILY FARM: Agriculture Dept. spokesmen were optimistic that these restrictions would take a sizable bite out of existing surpluses. But experience has shown that the farmers submitting to restricted planting usually take their least productive land out of use and cultivate their remaining acres even more intensively, often producing the same amount.

Whatever effect the new compromise farm program may have in whittling down some surplus accumulations, it is not geared to halt the decline of the family farm and the growth of corporate or big-business farming. The agricultural census of 1959 showed a loss of a million farms during the preceding five years. During that same period the number of farms which annually sold more than $10,000 worth of products increased by 212,000, or 36%.

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Soblen 'Spy' Case

(Continued from Page 1)

Soblen pleaded not guilty, he neither took the stand nor called any witnesses in his own behalf, both prosecution and defense were conducted on the basis of the same body of "evidence," the uncorroborated, undocumented testimony of three government witnesses.

The story the jury got of Dr. Soblen came principally from his brother, Jack Soble, who was brought from jail to testify against him. Soble, his wife Myra and an acquaintance, Jacob Albam, were arrested in January, 1957, for conspiracy to commit espionage. In jail awaiting trial Soble tried suicide and was found to be mentally as well as physically ill. Apparently at the urging of his wife, who feared for his health, he pleaded guilty to a lesser of the six counts in his indictment. The other counts in the indictment, involving a death penalty, were held over him until October, 1957. Soble's wife pleaded guilty with him. Later Albam also changed his plea of innocent to guilty and Soble was grilled endlessly by the FBI. In October, 1957, the other counts were dropped and all three were sentenced to prison without the charges against them ever being aired at a trial.

TRIAL DELAYED: The FBI did not pick up Dr. Soblen until November, 1960. He was not tried until June, and then only at his own insistence as a means of vindicating himself.

At the trial, as expected, the chief witness against him was Jack Soble, and this is the tale he told to incriminate his older brother:

In 1920, Soble's father, a wealthy bristle manufacturer (the family name was Sobolevicius), sent Jack and his brother Robert to college in Leipzig, Germany. Both joined the German Communist Party and remained active in it in Germany until 1929. Then both were expelled because of their support for the policies of Leon Trotsky. They formed their own group of Trotsky backers; by 1931, Robert had become a member of the Trotsky International Secretariat. Both brothers visited Trotsky in Turkey. Jack Soble alone saw him again in Copenhagen.

The brothers returned to the Soviet Union in the early 30s. Robert, having become a physician, went to Spain in 1936 as a volunteer doctor during the Civil War; Jack, after rejoining the CP in Russia, getting expelled a second time for Trotskyite activities, got back in good graces in 1936. Because of knowledge of German, he then became the editor of an anti-fascist, German language weekly, **Deutsche Central Zeitung**, published in Moscow. With the invasion of the Soviet Union by Hitler Germany, the publication was suspended.

THE 'PROPOSITION': Shortly afterward in 1939, Soble testified, he had a conversation in Moscow with the late Lavrenti Beria who at the time, Soble said, was "chief of the GPU." Soble testified Beria made him this proposition, in exchange for approving arrangements for 12 or 15 members of the Sobolevicius family to leave the war-torn country: "We would like both of you to go abroad to work for us to gather any information of any value to the Soviet Union." (Robert was not present, being at the time a practicing physician in Lithuania.)

Exit visas to Haiti were arranged for and issued to both brothers and their relatives by the Joint Jewish Defense Agency.

After voyaging half way around the world, Soble testified, he, his brother and their relatives, all of whom had been stranded in Shanghai for more than a year, got to the U.S. in the fall of 1941, through funds of relatives in Boston and Montreal. Several months after his arrival, Soble said, he went to the Amtorg office in New York City in connection with his father's bristle business, was asked to keep a rendezvous the next day with a Russian, and was at that time reminded of the promise exacted from him two years earlier in return for permission to leave the Soviet Union. Thereafter, Soble said, he, with his brother, proceeded over the next decade and a half to get all kinds of "information" for their motherland.

TWO WITNESSES: To back Jack Soble's testimony, the prosecution produced two witnesses: Mrs. Johanna Beker, a German-born naturalized American citizen, a stenographer who has worked for Shearman & Sterling, a downtown New York law firm, for the last 19 years; and Floyd Miller, a self-professed ex-Communist, free-lance writer and author of a book published the week after he testified.

Miller's testimony was vague and rather meaningless. He said that during World War II he had given the Russians information about Trotskyite activities in the U.S.; and that his contact man, whom he met three or four times and knew only as "Bob," was the defendant, Robert Soblen.

Miller's testimony was not mentioned either by the prosecutor in his summation or by the judge in his charge to the jury. Cross-examination brought from the witness the admission that he had never given any information about anything to Dr. Soblen; that the only topic they had discussed related to Miller's efforts to get a newspaper job, and that Miller himself had never dealt with anything relating to national defense. In the face of this, it is hard to challenge defense attorney Joseph Brill's statement in summation that Miller's testimony was "produced solely for the purpose of creating atmosphere, passion and prejudice."

ANOTHER STORY: Mrs. Beker, on direct examination, offered this story:

In her native Germany she had belonged to the Communist Youth League. With Hitler's coming to power in 1933, she went to Denmark and worked for the next two years as a typist for the Russian Trade Delegation. In 1935 she married a Russian and went to live in the Soviet Union. The NKVD arrested her husband in August, 1937, and she never saw or heard of him again. She herself until 1939 cooperated with the NKVD—submitting reports which, as she described them in court, were "a kind of gossip" about her friends.

Like Soble, she too quit the Soviet Union in June, 1939. Like Soble again, she described a conversation which, before being allowed to leave the Soviet Union, she had with a representative of the GPU. She said this official told her that, once in the U.S., she would be expected to "help" Russia. Beginning with her arrival in the U.S. in the fall of 1939 and for the next several years, Mrs. Beker said, she met from time to time with Russians and volunteered information about her friends in America and in the Soviet Union. The Russians paid her $30-$40 a month for such reports, she said. In 1942, in a cafeteria somewhere in the West 70s in New York City, the wife of a Soviet consular official introduced her to Dr. Soblen, saying that "he is a good friend" and from now on he "will be my contact."

WRITTEN REPORTS: Thereafter she saw Dr. Soblen "at somewhat irregular intervals" all through the war years and received $30-$40 a month from him. In 1943 at Dr. Soblen's instructions, she said, she met a German refugee named Dr. Horst Baerensprung in a cafeteria near Columbus Circle, New York City, receiving from him "an envelope containing some typewritten reports." All she knew about Dr. Baerensprung was what Dr. Soblen told her prior to her first meeting with him—"that he was a Social Democrat from Germany, and that he was doing much work with German refugee groups in America." Mrs. Beker described the contents of these reports in these words: "They were reports of meetings of groups of Germans then living in the United States, their possible plans for Party affiliations, and work in Germany after Hitler might be defeated."

Soon afterward, again on Dr. Soblen's instructions, and again in the vicinity of Columbus Circle, she met another German refugee, Hans Hirschfeld, who, she later learned, worked in the Office of Strategic Services. From him also she received "an envelope containing reports . . . [which] were biographical sketches of Germans and, again, a report of groups of Germans." She said she gave these to Dr. Soblen.

She continued to meet at regular intervals with both Dr. Baerensprung and Hirschfeld "through 1943, 1944, until early summer 1945," to pick up signed reports from each and to give each of them at each meeting "some money, which Dr. Soblen gave me to give to them."

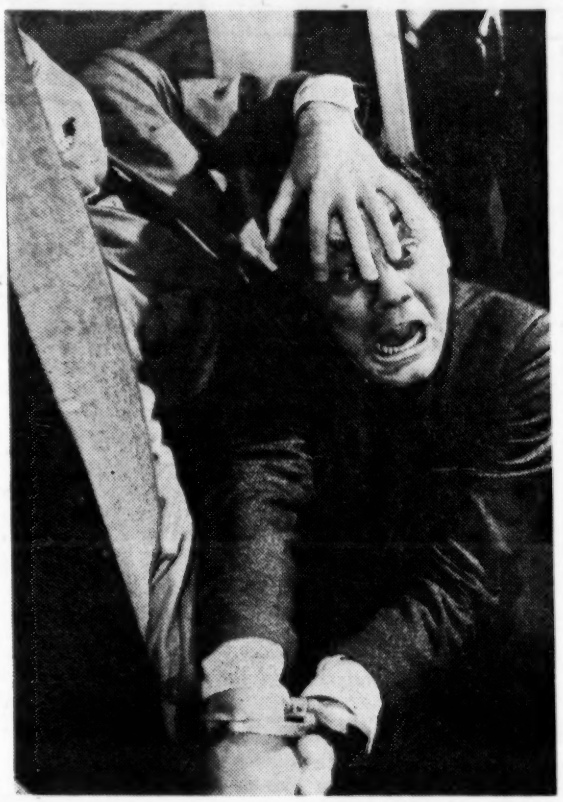
BIG PROJECT: The highlight of Mrs Beker's testimony was a statement she made concerning a report she said she received from Hirschfeld "in the spring of 1945." Mrs. Beker testified that the report, which she said she passed on to Dr. Soblen, declared Hirschfeld had "gained knowledge that the United States government was working on some important military project and making great progress with it and this would decide the end of the war considerably." This otherwise undescribed "important military project" was, Mrs. Beker testified, located somewhere "in the northwest of this country."

This, then, was the Government's case. The evidence of Jack Soble, Miller and Mrs. Beker, none of whom said they knew anything about the others' activities, was unsupported by the word of any other person. It was wholly undocumented. It was uncorroborated in any manner whatsoever. It depended entirely on what came from their own lips.

(The only "documentation" for anything testified to by any of these witnesses was evidence which took half a court day to introduce, confirming Mrs. Beker's recollection that she had rented a typewriter from the Plaza Typewriter Service in Manhattan in 1944. Also, the archivist of O.S.S., Gertrude C. Johnson, testified that both Dr. Baerensprung and Hirschfeld had worked as part-time consultants in 1945 for that organization.)

Thanks in large measure to the Supreme Court ruling in the Jencks case four years ago (which held that the FBI had to permit a defendant to inspect any pre-trial statements made to it about him by a prosecution witness) the defense, in cross-examination, was able to expose some significant gaps in the prosecution's case.

(The next article on the trial will deal with the cross-examination of witnesses, the summations and the sentencing of Dr. Soblen.)



Good show, Ernie. That's Borgnine (in handcuffs, eyes popping) doing his patriotic bit by playing the role of the "master spy" in Hollywood's celluloid mishmash, Man on a String. *The film was based on Boris Morros' patriotic book,* My Ten Years as a Counterspy. *This book was based more on fantasy than fact, and helped build up the myth of Jack Soble as "master spy" and his brother Dr. Robert Soblen as accomplice in a "spy ring." The article accompanying this photo is part of a series by William Reuben exposing the flimsy foundation of government cases against the two.*

Soblen released in bond

DR. SOBLEN was freed in $100,000 bond on Aug. 28 in New York. He went to the Federal Court House for the action from Bellevue Hospital, where he had been taken on Aug. 25 after collapsing in his prison cell and gashing his head in the fall. The money consisted of the original $10,000 bond, $30,000 in cash brought by Dr. Soblen's wife, and $60,000 in government bonds provided by Mrs. Helen C. Buttenweiser, an attorney.

Reception for Henry Winston at Hotel Theresa in New York

THE FRIENDS of Henry Winston will hold a public reception for him on Thursday, September 7, at 8 p.m. in the Skyline Ballroom of the Theresa Hotel, 2090 Seventh Ave., New York City. It will be the first public appearance of the Negro Communist leader since his release from Federal prison by Presidential order June 30.

Winston and his wife, Edna, will address the gathering at the Theresa Hotel.

The farm front

The kind of reporting you find in the GUARDIAN such as Lawrence Emery's story on the farm situation on page 1, is what makes the paper special. Your friends need the GUARDIAN too. Do them a favor—send them an introductory sub. Just $1 for 13 weeks.

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SAVE THE DATE! Friday evening, Sept. 29, for a meeting with Atty. Ben Margolis and Mrs. Dorothy Healey. (See classified, p. 7)

Back to McCarthyism?

ON JUNE 5, 1961, by narrow majorities of 5 to 4, the Supreme Court upheld the McCarran Act requiring the Communist Party to register as a foreign agent and to turn in membership lists, and the membership provision of the Smith Act, which makes it a crime to be a "knowing" Communist Party member.

Is America safer as a result? Are our democratic institutions more secure? Is freedom more firmly entrenched? Has our reputation for liberty been enhanced in the eyes of the people of the world?

Or have we taken two long steps backward toward the dark days of the McCarthy era?

President Harry S. Truman vetoed the proposed McCarran Law on the grounds that it was unconstitutional and unenforceable.

Four justices of the Supreme Court—Chief Justice Warren and Justices Black, Douglas and Brennan—vigorously dissented from the Court's majority in these cases.

Justice Warren wrote: "I do not think that the Court's action can be justified . . . I believe that the (McCarran) Act **does** constitute a violation of the Fifth Amendment.'

Justice Black stated: "When the practice of outlawing parties and various public group begins, no one can say where it will end." And all four justices raised important constitutional objections that have not been acted upon.

Throughout the country, many newspapers which are opposed to Communism have expressed grave misgivings over the Court's decisions (see below).

Leading organizations (below) have long expressed firm opposition to the sweeping provisions of the McCarran Act.

Representative world journals consider the result will be to "encourage the spirit of McCarthy which has never been quite extinguished" (**The Observer**, London, England).

WE, the undersigned, take our stand with the Court's minority, and with those who oppose both the McCarran and Smith Acts.

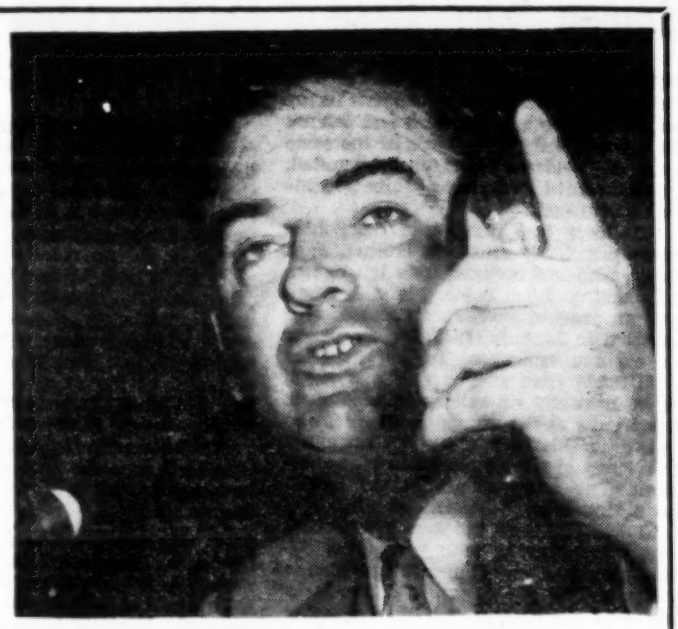
It is not just the Communists who will suffer from these repressive measures, but our country, our people, our democratic institutions and our nation's prestige. If the McCarran Act remains law, it becomes possible, under its dangerous theory of 'parallelism," to outlaw many organizations as "Communist fronts" for advocating liberal, democratic, civil liberties and peace programs.

Under such a law, what assurance can there be for the immunity of the NAACP and the Freedom Riders, already branded by the segregationists as "Reds" and "Red dupes" for insisting on civil rights? Or even for an ex-President Eisenhower who has been dubbed a "Communist" by the John Birch Society?

It is for these reasons that we support the convening of a National Assembly for Democratic Rights, to be held in New York City on Saturday and Sunday, September 23 and 24, at St. Nicholas Arena, 69 W. 66 St.

The Assembly is a single-action undertaking, confined to bringing together supporters of constitutional freedoms. Its object is to rally public opinion and give organized voice to the defense of Constitutional freedom.

In supporting the Assembly, we do not commit ourselves to the views of any organization or individual who is or may become a victim of the law. We join ourselves with them only in defending the freedom guaranteed by the Constitution.



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Typical Editorial Comment on The Supreme Court Decisions

St. Louis Post Dispatch—June 14, 1961
". . . in the name of governmental security, serious breaches are being made in the guarantees which once made our laws the admiration of the free world."

Atlanta Constitution—June 8, 1961
". . . this ruling has the effect of outlawing beliefs. We have never done that in America."

El Cajon Valley (Calif.) News—
"Under this majority opinion, the temptation to pin a Communist label on those who disagree with you about public power or socialized medicine will be too dangerous to indulge."

The Tennessean, Nashville—June 7, 1961
"As long as there are those at large who do not hesitate to call former President Eisenhower a conscious agent of Communism and also a traitor, the nation needs to be on guard against reckless charges . . ."

Minneapolis Sunday Tribune—July 9, 1961
"Can we no longer tolerate free speech? . . . Are we ready to start down the road of believing that only, the Democratic and Republican Party are 'safe' to belong to, and that someday perhaps even one of them . . .?"

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Because of the Labor Day holiday the GUARDIAN deadline for advertising copy for the issue dated Sept. 11 (which goes to press Tues., Sept. 5) has been advanced. Copy should be on in our hands by Fri., Sept. 1.

BOOKS & PUBLICATIONS

FREEDOMWAYS
A quarterly review of the Negro Freedom Movement, edited by Shirley Graham. Summer issue of over 100 pages includes: Africa & the French Rev. (W.E.B. Du Bois); The Negro & the Cuban Rev. (Sixton Gaston Aguere); A Freedom Rider Speaks His Mind (Jimmy McDonald); Thoughts on Federation in East Africa (A. Zangola) and many more. Subscription: $3.50 a yr.; single copies, $1. 799 Broadway, New York 3, N.Y.

JEWISH CURRENTS, SEPT. issue just off press, includes: **"The Berlin Brink" & "Israeli Elections"** by Editor, Morris U. Schappes; **Critical review of William Shirer's anti-Nazi best seller** by Charles R. Allen Jr.; The Rev. Dr. Milton A. Galamison on **"The Unfinished Business of the Civil War"**; Short Story, **"The Last Goat in Brownsville"** by Haver-Pover; Report on Workshop on Jewish Secular Education. Subs $4 yearly ($4.50 outside USA). Single copies 40c. JEWISH CURRENTS, Dept. G, 22 E. 17 St. NYC 3.

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Clemency is being considered for Wilkinson and Braden

TWICE IN ONE WEEK delegations presented petitions to the White House for clemency for Frank Wilkinson and Carl Braden, who are serving one-year sentences for contempt of the House Un-American Activities Committee. Lee White, special counsel to President Kennedy, said the petitions would be considered by the Justice Dept. and a recommendation would come from Atty. Gen. Robert F. Kennedy. He acknowledged that the cases stirred wide public interest.

About 2,000 petition signatures were presented Aug. 23 by a delegation from the New York Council to Abolish the HUAC. Delegation members included Prof. Otto Nathan, Rev. Lee H. Ball and Wilkinson's wife, Jean.

BRADEN PETITION: On Aug. 16, a delegation of some of the nation's most distinguished civil rights leaders presented petitions on behalf of Braden, who is field secretary of the Southern Conference Educational Fund, a Southwide interracial organization working for integration.

The petitions were signed by more than 1,800 leaders in the field of human rights, representing all 50 states. The delegation spokesman was Dr. Ralph Abernathy, president of the Montgomery Improvement Association of Montgomery, Ala., leader of the bus boycott there. Wyatt Tee Walker of Atlanta, Ga., executive director of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, was delegation chairman.

Braden and Wilkinson entered jail on May 1 after the Supreme Court upheld their convictions in 5-4 decisions. They are eligible for parole on Sept. 1 and if they are allowed full time off for good behavior, they may be released next Feb. 1. Both are at the Federal prison camp in Greenville, S.C.

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Your humor penetrates these humorless days.

Your mind makes us mindful of learning.

Your vigorous spirit evaporates an air of despair.

Your finely wrought hands weave a thread of steely courage.

Your overflowing heart gives us heart.

We love and revere you always.

Helen Prusslin Lewis

BOOKS

Belfrage lands

MY MASTER COLUMBUS,* by Cedric Belfrage, is the eighth book by a redoubtable journalist who keeps our minds clear and our consciences keen. Both these blessings the new book will confer; yet it is different from the other seven, and indeed it is different from most other books. It has, however, certain notable ancestors, such as Voltaire's **L'Ingénu** and Diderot's **Supplément au Voyage de Bougainville**, in which virtuous primitives confront corrupt Europeans, listen for a time to civilized nonsense, and then cry out (like the Tahitian in Diderot's yarn), "Quel monstrueux tissu d'extravagances tu m' expose là!"

Belfrage has hit upon the idea of imagining what happened to a native of San Salvador who saw the arrival of Columbus on Oct. 12, 1492, and who, at Columbus's departure, swam out to join his company. This young man, Yayael by name, proves a remarkable linguist, learns Spanish, acts as interpreter, goes with Columbus to Spain, is exhibited there to many people, is loved by at least one, returns to the New World on several voyages, observes the equal lust of conquerors for women and for gold, and ends at last in the clutch of inquisitors—an honest man and therefore a heretic. His candor and the total inability of inquisitors to comprehend it are the author's comment upon happenings in that New World which has now become old.

THE EQUATION of virtue with naivete, which our ancestors of 200 years ago thought they found in less developed peoples, remains a fascinating idea. It is probably not true, since virtue in fact requires much sophisti-

cation. It is, however, an excellent literary device for confronting magnates with the innocence they have lost. Moreover, it allows the reader to see, quite accurately, the pains of virtue in the presence of power.

For this purpose, Belfrage has developed a narrative style of such simplicity as to be a **tour de force.** Yayael talks throughout in the first person, in a language convincingly suitable—a sort of innocent English (never mind that he really learned Spanish), which exactly conveys his astonishment at strange men, strange practices, strange ideals. His vocabulary contains words which my limited scholarship has not embraced: These may be Caribbean coinage or the author's own contribution to philology. For example, things go on in "hammacas" which are quite remarkable unless "hammacas" are something other than the hammocks I know about. Also there are words for acts and organs which the context itself sufficiently explains.

I THINK (as reviewers say with far less reason than I have) that you won't put this book down. You'll find Yayael's sophisticated innocence (which is Belfrage's innocent sophistication) charming, and you will love his various ladies with the same ease that he himself shows. As for the inquisitors, well, as you know, nobody likes **them.** Yayael could not understand how there could be such people. No more than I.

And perhaps, like me, you will find that the enchantment of the book leaves an enchanting question. How did our editor-in-exile, normally and blithely, achieve all this quietness and charm? He's supposed to be in the midst of a thriving revolution—and in the Spanish language at that. Whence came these lovely, simply cadences of English prose, these insights which have the candor and directness of a child's?

Was it the Caribbean climate? If so, perhaps we should go thither, not for rest but for literature. Since, however, few of us can go to any part of the Caribbean and none of us can go to one particular part of it, let us rather read **My Master Columbus,** be regaled, and be made wise.

—Barrows Dunham

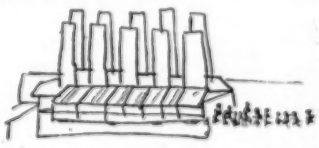
**MY MASTER COLUMBUS, by Cedric Belfrage. Doubleday & Co., New York City. 285 pp. $3.95. Available through GUARDIAN Buying Service.*

the SPECTATOR

Technology and art

Following is one of a series of letters entitled The Working Artist, *addressed to persons in the various fields. They are being sent out privately by the Guardian's art editor in the belief that a new understanding of the arts as one of man's means of interpreting existence and his chief means of creating cultural values is desperately needed, particularly in industrialized countries, to balance today's overemphasized rationalism. Those interested in receiving copies from the limited supply may write to Robert Joyce, Box 934, Brooklyn 1, N. Y.*

CAN BUILDINGS CHANGE—as well as reflect—conditions in a society? Can a style of construction affect the destinies of a people? In particular, are there cultural monuments, synthetic mountains toward which people are drawn, like the fabled Mohammed, to be inspired or perhaps stupefied? We may suppose that the Egyptian and American Indian pyramids, the Babylonian ziggurats, the medieval cathedrals and similar colossal works moved, and so changed, their early beholders. In the United States we, too, have big buildings, some of the biggest ever. If we are being moved and changed by this, it seems fair to ask how. Are our monumental works elevating our emotions or anesthetizing us? And if our sensitivity is being reduced, as I believe it is, can we expect to live well—or safely? Are we being changed, by something we are told is art, in ways that we would not consciously choose to change?



New buildings are being erected in Brooklyn near Borough Hall and old ones are being cleaned. One of the dominant features of the renovated Civic Center is a new State Court House executed in a style that certainly is not traditional. It may be functionalist or old-fashioned modern or even what is called the New Brutalism. Whatever it may be called, to test my impression that an aspect of this building was generally typical of our large architecture I revisited a number of other new buildings in New York City. The impression—of dissociation from the cultural past and of coldness and inhumanity—remains.

SOME ARCHITECTS tell us that this is due, in part at least, to the profit motive, to trading off the esthetic for salable space and the saved dollar. From this it might appear that we are not, after all, the wealthiest nation the world has known. Or perhaps we are much stingier than the ancients. I do not believe that either is true. The profits and savings from making these structures so barren must be relatively small. In a world where capitalism is being challenged, these sums cannot have been large enough to have had the major influence on public-relations-minded billion-dollar corporations. And up to now, in public buildings and especially in court houses, the values of cultural precedent, like those of legal precedent, have weighed more heavily than petty economies with our officials. Yet these buildings, through which any American might some day have to pass, are like monstrous warehouses or out-sized filing cabinets in which featureless objects (you and I) can be filed and forgotten. Here the walls, even when of glass, do not invite the eye, the heart or the mind; they shut them out and shut them in. A sterile flatness is relieved only by geometric rows of windows. The geometry may be, and probably is, ingenious. But it is geometry rather than art, the polished rationalism of least means and ruthless efficiency. There is little ornament, no carefree invention or flights of fancy. Like Kafka's Joseph K. one must feel accused on entering such places and even on standing before them. Nowhere are there signs of human warmth.

FOR THE FIRST TIME since artists decorated the ancient caves, perhaps for the first time in human cultural existence, it is now the rule rather than the exception for explicitly emotional works to be absent from important public structures. In place of rich ornaments or grand sculptures and murals, we are treated to feats of engineering. It is true that the past did not have such technology and science as we boast. It is also true that these are intellectually and practically admirable. But our admiration of the sciences does not provide us with the source of values and the foundation for morality which we find in an esthetic.

A supposed beauty of science cannot substitute for the controlled, emotional pseudo-experience of the arts. With ages of art conditioning behind us, we may experience refined feelings in all kinds of situations, including those of contemplating our own science and technology. Nevertheless, the spectators' feelings are no part of the responsibility of these logical callings. On the other hand, stimulating and directing feeling is the primary function of the arts. Technology, standing in for an art, must borrow any emotional effects it may have from arts which the beholder has previously experienced. Therefore, technology offered as art is false art.

IF TRUE ART STIMULATES US, then false art, whose effects are second-hand, sponges from true art and at the same time shuts true art out of its field. Such false art must eventually narrow our emotional experiences and impede our reactiveness. If this goes on for long, it may fatally affect the destinies of a people. Just as our spiritual salvation may be worked out first of all in our arts, so the destruction of a people may be prepared by frauds imposed on their feelings. The substitution of technology for art, with slick rationalizations masquerading as emotionalism, on one level, while advertising sensationalism busily undermines mass feeling on another, may be dealing with our democracy as the poleax deals with the steer.

—Robert Joyce

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NEWSPAPER

IN MEMORIAM

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